

THE
WAY
Of Living in a ^k
METHOD,
AND BY
RULE:
OR, A
Regular Way
OF
Employing our Time:

Recommended in a short, plain,
practical Discourse to the Cha-
rity-Schools, for the Use of
the Youth brought up in them.

By a *Presbyter of the Church of*
ENGLAND.

L O N D O N :

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Eccles. III. 1.

To every Thing there is a Season,
and a Time to every
Purpose under the Heaven.



TIME is one of those Talents which our Great Master has intrusted us with, to improve to his Glory, and our own Happiness. And we should all of us be very careful how we employ our Time: because we must one Day most certainly give an Account of it. But how little is this consider'd in the World? For do

not most Persons live as if their Time was their own, and they might do what they would with it? But let none of us deceive our selves; for we were not made to live as we list, but to serve God, and have receiv'd Rules from him to direct us how to serve him. And we should so order our Lives, as to be always either actually employ'd in Serving God, or in fitting our selves for his Service. This may seem a hard Saying, and scarce possible to be observ'd by us. But would we cast our Lives into a Method, and bring our selves to live by Rule, we should find no such great Difficulty in it: For it would only be a Dividing our Time between the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreshments of our Natures; and an Alloting to these Offices, Works and Refreshments, their proper Seasons, and an Observing at all Times, so far as we can, these Seasons; this seems to be recommended in my Text; for it tells us, That there is to every Thing a proper Season, and a Time to every Purpose under the Heaven. In speaking

speaking to these Words, I shall do these following Things.

I. I shall consider the Nature of those Things which should employ our Time.

II. I shall shew what Kind of Method is proper to be observed by us in the Dividing our Time between those Things.

III. I shall give some Rules to be observed by us in the Performance of these Things at their proper Seasons.

IV. And lastly, I shall offer some Arguments to persuade you to endeavour to live, so far as you can, in a Method, and by Rule.

I. I shall consider the Nature of those Things which should employ our Time. These Things are, the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreshments of our Natures.

1. The *First* Things which should employ our Time, are the holy Offices of Religion; such as private and publick Prayer, Reading the Holy

Scriptures, and other good Books, Hearing the Word of God read and explained by Catechizing and Preaching, Meditating by our selves on what we read or hear, discoursing of it with others, Self-Examination, and receiving the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper. And these religious Offices are of the greatest Consequence and Importance to us, because they do more immediately concern God, our Souls, and another World ; for they are the most solemn Expressions of our Subjection to God, and Dependance upon him, the blessed Instruments of maintaining the greatest Communication between God and our Souls that we are capable of in this Life, and the happy Means of preparing us for the Enjoyment of a more intimate and perfect Union with him, in that Life which is to come. They are, as our blessed Lord tells us, *Luke x. 42. the one Thing needful, that better Part which can never be taken from us* ; for they tend to improve us in all those Graces and Virtues in this World, which we shall carry along with us into the other. And

And this obligeth us to spend so much of our Time in these Holy Offices, as we can spare from the proper Works of our Callings, and the necessary Refreshments of our Natures; to spend some Part of every Day, a greater Part of the Festival and Fast-Days, and the greatest Part of the Lord's Day in them. This is the best and most useful Way of employing our Time; for this will improve our short Time in this World, into a blessed Eternity in the next.

2. The Second Thing which should employ our Time, are the Works of our Callings. Tho' there be no more than one general Calling, the Calling of Religion, which we are all of us admitted into, and do all of us make Profession of, yet there are a great many particular Callings, which we are brought up to, and placed in. And these particular Callings are of different Kinds, for some do require the Labour of the Body, others the Labour of the Mind, and others the Labour of both Body and Mind. And every particular Calling hath some peculiar Work and Employment be-
 longing

longing to it. And every Person
 should spend so much of his Time as
 he can spare from the holy Offices of
 Religion, and the necessary Refresh-
 ments of Nature, in the Works of his
 own Calling; for this is what God
 hath by Nature given us Faculties for,
 and does by his Word oblige us to.
 And this is necessary both for our
 selves, and for the World. 'Tis neces-
 sary for our selves, to keep us from
 Idleness, which otherwise we would
 fall into, and be ruin'd by. For we
 are active Beings made for Action, and
 if we be not employed in that which
 is good, we shall be employ'd in that
 which is ill. And this is necessary
 for the World to, to minister to those
 many Wants and Necessities which
 all Mankind are liable to, and do la-
 bour under; for the World subsists
 upon Labour, upon the Labour of the
 Body and the Mind, and is upholden
 by it: And without it the whole Earth
 would soon become one great Wilder-
 ness, and all Mankind must in a short
 Time perish from off the Face of it.
 We are indeed chiefly made for ano-
 ther World, but we must take this
 World

World in our Way to it: And whilst we are in this World, we must be supported and maintained in it; and this Support and Maintenance is owing to God's Blessing upon the Labours of Men.

3. The Third Thing which should employ our Time, are the necessary Refreshments of our Natures. Such is the State of our Souls and Bodies in this World, that they can't subsist without daily Refreshments; for our Bodies are continually wasting, and often oppressed with Weariness, and must be supported by frequent Supplies of Nourishment, and constant Returns of Rest. And our Souls do so much depend upon our Bodies, that they can't continue long in any earnest Exercises, or busy Employments, but they must be now and then relieved by some little unbendings and Diversions. This makes it necessary for us to spend some of our Time in the necessary Refreshments of our Souls and Bodies, that we may be enabled to perform the Offices of Religion with a becoming Vigour, and

the Works of our Callings, with a suitable Diligence.

And thus I have gone through the First Thing propounded, and considered the Nature of those Things which should employ our Time, the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreshments of our Natures :

I shall now proceed to the,

Second Thing propounded, and shew what kind of Method is proper to be observed by us, in the dividing our Time between these Things. Since we have many Things to do, and can't do them all together, and at once, but must do them successively one after another, we should range them all into some kind of Order and Method, and allot to each of them their distinct Times and Seasons. Now the proper Method would be, to begin the Day with pious Meditations, devout Prayers, and careful reading some Portion of Scripture, and other good Books, so far as we are capable of it, and have Leisure for it, always thanking God for his Pre-
servation

servation of us the Night past, com-
 mending our selves to the Protection
 of his Grace and Providence the pre-
 sent Day, and resolving, with his Help,
 to serve him in it, by doing those
 Duties we shall have an Opportunity
 of, and avoiding those Sins we shall
 be tempted to. And after this, we
 should proceed to the Works and
 Business of our Callings, allotting,
 at convenient Distances of Time, such
 Portions of it, as are necessary for the
 Refreshments of our Natures; min-
 gling with both our Works and Re-
 freshments, such pious Meditations
 and devout Ejaculations, as may
 sanctify both to us: And then we
 should conclude the Day as we began
 it, with some holy Offices, such as
 diligent Reading, pious Meditations,
 careful Self-Examination, and devout
 Prayer, always thanking God for the
 good we have done, or received, con-
 fessing to him the Sins we have com-
 mitted, and the Duties we have ne-
 glected, imploring of him the Forgive-
 ness of them, resolving against them
 for the Time to come, committing our
 selves to the Care of his good Provi-
 dence

dence the Night present, and employing our waking Portions of it in some short Acts of Praise, Thanksgiving, or Prayer. Some such Method as this we should prescribe to our selves, and observe, so far as we can, in the spending of our ordinary Days. And tho' the great Duties of Religion should be done by us every Day, and we should every Day worship God, and every Day commemorate his Benefits, and every Day reflect on our Sins, yet a private Exercise of these Duties is not sufficient; for both the Honour of God, and Edification of our selves and others, do require a publick Performance of them. And therefore God himself, and the Church, by an Authority from him, have set apart some Solemn Days for the publick Administration of the holy Offices of Religion, and do oblige all Persons to a constant and regular Performance of them. These Days, are the Lord's Days, the Festivals and Fasts of the Church. And we should upon these Days employ our selves more in the Service of God, and less in our own; for we should lay aside all our worldly Business

Business on the Lord's Day, and abate, if we can conveniently, some Part of it on the other Days, that we may have Leisure to meet together in Publick, and joya in those Offices which are there administred; and to enlarge our Devotions in private, by adding to them such Prayers, Reading, and Meditations, as are suitable to the Occasions, always praising and thanking God for the Mercies commemorated in the Festivals, and beseeching him to give us Grace to live answerably to those Mercies; and confessing and lamenting those Sins which we are to be humbled for on the Fasts, and beseeching God to shew Mercy towards us, and to turn away from us the Judgments which we have deserved by those Sins. These are the great Ends for which these Days were set apart by God and his Church, and we should employ so much as we can of these Days to these Ends, in Obedience to their Institution of them. And to encourage us in this holy Employment, we should consider, that the more Time we spend in the Worship and Service
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of God, the greater Comfort we shall find in it in this World, and the greater Reward we shall receive for it in that World which is to come.

And thus I have gone through the Second Thing propounded, and shewn you what Kind of Method is proper to be observed by us in the dividing our Time, between the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreshments of our Natures. I shall now proceed to the,

III. Third Thing propounded, and give you some Rules to be observ'd in the Performance of these Things at their proper Seasons.

I. The First of those Things, wherein some Portion of our Time should be employed, are the holy Offices of Religion; and the Rules which I shall give you to be observ'd by you in the Exercise of these Offices, are these following ones:

1. Be faithful and constant in these holy Offices, at their proper Seasons, and never omit them, unless you be taken off from them by some Work
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of Necessity or Charity; for the proper Season for these holy Offices, lays an Obligation upon you to perform them; and consequently to neglect them at that Time, either through Wilfulness or Carelessness, is a Breach of that Obligation. Besides, by a constant Performance of these holy Offices at their proper Seasons, we shall bring our selves to a Habit of performing them; and that, by degrees, will make it so easy and delightful to us to perform them, that it will at length be as great an Uneasiness to be kept from these holy Offices, as it was at first to be brought to them; for it will fare with us in these holy Offices, as it does in our common Meals, we shall find something in our selves to put us in Mind of them, and to call us to them at their set Times.

2. Be very reverent, attentive, and devout in your Performance of these holy Offices. The Offices of Religion are holy Offices, Offices separated from common, and consecrated to sacred Uses. This makes a mighty Difference between these
 holy

holy Offices of Religion, and the
 common Actions of the World, and
 you should take Care to preserve
 this Distinction between them, by a
 suitable Behaviour at them. For to
 carry our selves in the publick
 Churches as we do in private
 Houses, to speak to God as we do
 to one another, to hear his holy
 Word as we do common Talk, and
 to receive the blessed Sacrament as
 we do an ordinary Meal, is very
 unsuitable to the Greatness of his
 Majesty, the Sacredness of his House,
 and the Holiness of his Institutions.
 This is to confound all Distinction
 of Persons and Things, and to make
 all Places and Actions alike, and
 would in a little Time leave no
 such Thing as any divine Worship in
 the World; for to worship God, is to
 honour him; but we can't be said
 to honour him, unless we shew a
 peculiar Regard to him, in all our
 Communications with him. And
 therefore you should take Care, all
 possible Care, to perform all the
 holy Offices of Religion in a holy
 Manner, in such a Manner as is some
 Ways

Ways suitable to the Nature of them, with the most composed Temper of Mind, and awful Behaviour of Body, to shew that you are serious, and in good earnest in them, and do mind what you are about, and whom you are concerned with.

3. Don't rest in a bare Performance of these holy Offices, but have a due Regard to the Effect of them upon your Hearts and Lives: For the great End of these holy Offices, is to instruct you in the Will of God, and to enable you to live according to that blessed Will. Thus you should hear the Word of God, to learn from thence what it is which he requires of you, that you may make it your great Care and Endeavour to perform it. You should join in the Prayers of the Church, to obtain from God his Help, to enable you to serve him, by doing every Thing you know he commands, and avoiding every Thing you know he forbids: And you should receive the holy Sacrament, to lay a new Obligation upon your selves to make good the Terms of your

your Baptismal Covenant with God, and to receive from him fresh Supplies of Grace to strengthen you in the fulfilling that Obligation. This is what you should all aim at, in the Use of these holy Offices. And unless you receive these Benefits from them, you do but deceive your selves in the Use of them; for the great End of these holy Offices, is a holy Life. They are only the Means to bring you to it, and improve you in it. And if you don't perform them in such a Manner, as to make your selves holy by them, they are no more than empty Forms, and insignificant Actions. For the best Means in the World signifie nothing to us, any further than they produce and promote the End they were appointed for. And therefore you should not rest in a bare Performance of these holy Offices, but make it your great Care and Endeavour to improve your selves by them, in all those Graces and Virtues which the Gospel requires of us.

2. The

2. The Second Thing wherein some Portion of our Time should be employed, are the Works of our Callings. And the Rules which I shall give to be observed by you, in the Performance of these Works, are these following ones.

1. Be honest and conscientious in the Works of your Callings. The great End of your Callings is, to make you useful and profitable Members of the World, by ministering to the Necessities and Conveniencies of it. And the Way for you to answer this End, is by an honest and conscientious Discharge of the Works of your Callings; the doing by others in those Works, as you would they should do by you, were you in their Circumstances, and they in yours; for this will make you useful to all those who have any Dealings with you. Never then oppress or over-reach one another, but make a Conscience of whatever you do: And then your Callings will become a great Blessing to the World, and your selves the happy
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Instruments of promoting the Good and Welfare of it.

2. Be diligent and careful in the Works of your Calling, for you are all no more than Servants in the great Family of this World, to your Lord and Master, the Almighty Governour of it. And the Works of your several Callings are the Business he has intrusted you with, and obliged you to. And you should not be idle and negligent in your Business, but careful and diligent, because Care and Diligence are the Duties of Servants, and what every Master expects from them.

3. Look up to God in all the Works of your Callings, and beg his Blessing upon them; for though your own Care and Diligence be necessary, because God governs the World by Means; yet it is his Blessing which must crown your Care and Diligence with Success, and give a happy Issue to 'em; because it is not the Means which do give that good Issue and Success, but God by those Means.

4. Be

4. Be not too Anxious, or over-Sollicitous in the Works of your Callings: For 'tis your Business only to take a prudent Care, and use a proper Diligence, and beg God's Blessing upon your Care and Diligence, and then to leave the Issue to the All-wise Disposal of God's Providence; because that is his Work, and not yours. Do then your Part, what belongs to you, and leave God to do his, what belongs to him: And do not perplex and disquiet your selves about the Issue of your Affairs, but rest satisfied that they are in much better Hands than your own, and will be ordered for you far better than you could order them for yourselves.

3. The third Things, wherein some Portion of our Time must be employ'd, are the Refreshments of our Natures. And the Rules which I shall give you to be observed by you in these Refreshments, are these following ones.

1. Be temperate in your Diet, and eat not to indulge and gratifie a nice Palate, or a wanton Appetite, but to serve the real Necessities of your Natures, to repair the Decays of your Bodies, and to continue them in Health and Strength, sufficient to discharge your particular Duties to God, your Neighbour, and your selves.

2. Be sober in your Drinking, and observe such Rules and Measures in it, as never to drown or disorder your Reason, impair or weaken your Constitutions, mispend or squander away your Money, or your Time, but only to quench your Thirst, digest your Meat, and cheer and raise your sinking Spirits, when oppress'd with Faintness or Sickness, Melancholy, or worldly Trouble.

3. Be moderate in your Sleep, and use it only to relieve the Weariness of your Bodies, and the Faintness of your Spirits, not to indulge a slothful temper, or a Habit of Laziness.

4. Be regular in your Recreations and Diversions, use none but lawful ones, and those purely to refresh your tired Spirits, and to make you the more fit for Business, not to take a great Part of your Time from off your Hands, and to become a Trade and Employment to you.

And thus I have given you some few short Rules to be observed by you in the Performance of the holy Offices of Religion, the Works of your Callings, and the Refreshments of your Natures, at their proper Seasons; and shall now proceed to the last thing propounded, which was,

IV. *Fourthly and Lastly,* To offer some Arguments to perswade you to endeavour to live so far as you can, in a Method, and by Rule. And these Arguments shall be taken from the Advantages of such an orderly and regular Life. Now, many and great are the Advantages of such a Life; but I can only set before you a few of them, and I must be very short in them too, because

because the Time will not allow me to be long.

1. The first Advantage of such a regular Life is, the bringing us to a Fixedness and Constancy of Temper: We are naturally Fickle and Unconstant, always running from one thing to another, and never fixing long upon any thing. But the living for some time in a Method, and by Rule, will correct this Fickleness and Inconstancy of Temper, and bring us to a Habit of Steadiness and Constancy.

2. The second Advantage of such a regular Life, is the giving us the greater Facility or Easiness in doing every thing well; for by often beginning the same thing, and doing it over and over again, we get a Habit of doing it; and what we do by Habit, we do with a great deal of Readiness and Ease: And what we do readily and easily, we generally do well.

3. The third Advantage of such a regular Life, is the making us the more perfect in what we do: For it is become a common Saying

Saying amongst us, that Practice or Use makes Perfectness. And this Saying is founded upon a general Observation, or Experience in all worldly Affairs. And this is as true in religious ones too; for we proceed there from Acts, to Habits of Vertue; and the oftner we perform the Act of any Vertue, the sooner we shall attain to a Habit of that Vertue, and the more perfect we shall grow in that Habit. So that by a daily Exercise of Piety and Devotion in the holy Offices of Religion, of Honesty and Diligence in the Works of our Callings, of Moderation and Sobriety in the Refreshments of our Natures, we shall still more and more improve our selves in these Vertues, and rise by Degrees to the greatest Perfection of them.

4. The fourth Advantage of such a regular Life, is the sanctifying all our Time, and the making our whole Lives to be a continual Service of God; because whatsoever we are about, will be either a Part of his Service, or in order to

it. The Acts of Religion and the Works of our Calling, will be an actual serving of God; and our Eating and Drinking, and even our Recreations, will be a fitting our selves for his Service. And thus our whole Time will be in some Measure sanctified and employed in the Service of our God.

5. And, Lastly, the fifth Advantage of such a regular Life, is a preparing and fitting our selves for a blessed Eternity: Because by thus dividing our Time between the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreshments of our Natures, and allotting to these Offices, Works, and Refreshments, their proper Seasons, and observing at all times, so far as we can, these Seasons, we shall be able to give a good Account of our Time, when we are, at the last Day, call'd to it; and may then expect to receive from our great Lord and Master, the Reward of it, in that joyful Sentence: *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into thy Master's Joy.*

And

And thus I have gone through what I propounded to do upon the Words of my Text: For I have,

I. Considered the Nature of those Things which should employ our Time.

II. I have shewn you what kind of Method is proper to be observ'd by us in the dividing our Time between those Things.

III. I have given some Rules to be observ'd by us in the Performance of these Things at their proper Seasons.

IV. And Lastly, I have offered some Arguments to perswade you to endeavour to live, so far as you can, in a Method, and by Rule.

And now what remains for me to do more, at this Time, than to beseech Almighty God to give us all Grace so to improve our short Time in this World, that we may receive the Reward of it in a blessed Eternity in that World which is to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord: To whom, &c. *Amen.*

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